

# ***Texans Deserve Better***

At this point I had hoped to tell you about the wonderful legislation passed this session requiring voters to present a photo ID in order to vote. Unfortunately, Voter Photo ID has died this session, along with many other very important pieces of legislation. The most that we can hope for now is that the Governor will call a special session that will address the issue.

For a quick recap on Voter Photo ID, please recall that the Senate passed SB 362 in March. This bill provided that a person has to show a photo ID in order to vote and if they do not have a photo ID, there is a list of alternative documents they can show to prove their identity. This list includes utility bills, mail addressed from a government agency, and other alternative ID's.

The Elections Committee in the House held two days of hearings on this issue in April. The Committee considered several bills which ranged from pure photo ID (nothing but a photo ID) to bills allowing alternative identifications and bills delaying implementation for four years. Finally, on Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, the Elections Committee passed Senate Bill 362 out of the committee, foregoing passing a separate Voter ID bill. The vote was 5-4. Four out of five Republicans voted for the bill, with Representative Bonnen voting against the bill because he felt the bill was not strong enough.

Senate Bill 362 was positive in that it required immediate implementation and required a photo ID in order to vote. The big negative with this bill was that it allowed the list of alternative forms of identification such as the presentation of a utility bill. We had hoped that some amendments could be added that would fix some of the less desirable provisions in the bill.

Unfortunately, the Democrats vowed that they would put up a very strong fight against a Voter Photo ID bill. This is despite the fact that poll after poll has shown that Democrat as well as Republican voters, across all ethnicities, support Voter Photo ID.

The SB 362 was sent to the Calendars Committee to be put on the House Calendar. We heard rumors that the bill would be on the House Calendar last Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>. In order for this bill to become law, it had to be passed by the House no later than midnight, Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>. The House never got to vote on the bill. The Democrats delayed not only this legislation but many other important pieces of legislation. Texans deserve better. Texans have been denied much very important legislation due to the senseless delays by the Democrats.

We hope for a special session that will pass this vital legislation as well as the other vital legislation that died this session. We will continue to work for passage of Voter Photo ID. In the meantime, I want to thank each and every one of you for huge amount of time and effort you contributed to this effort. Many of you drove to Austin for the rallies, you wrote letters and made phone calls and all of your efforts are appreciated so much.

I would also like to thank the members of SAFE-Texas (Secure and Fair Elections - Texas) for their long, long hours in getting this legislation passed. If you get the opportunity, please thank these people. [www.SAFETexas.org](http://www.SAFETexas.org)

Melinda Fredricks, chairman  
Tom Mechler  
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Toni Anne Dashiell  
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If and when a special session is called, we will keep you informed.

***Barbara Larson***

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